ORAL HISTORY OF GRACE ABBOTT, February 27, 1992, Sebastopol

Arlene: Grace, could you tell me your name, address, your date of birth and place of birth?
Grace: My name is Grace Abbott and I live at 445 Twin Lakes Circle in Santa Rosa. That's the Oakmont Village and I was born October the 20th, 1907 in Sebastopol.
Arlene: Were you born at home?
Grace: Well, at my grandmother's home, up on Florence Avenue. [possibly her aunt Florence Jackson's house. Mr. Jackson had a bakery here in town].
Arlene: Which house was that on Florence?
Grace: I don't know the number of it, but it's the second house from the corner.
Arlene: Near Healdsburg?
Grace: No, near the other end, by Bodega. The next block on Florence Avenue on the right hand side. And it's the second house. It's still there.
Arlene: It's not the Strout House? It's near the Strout House?
Grace: Yes it is, it's just this side, about three houses this side. In fact, Erma Strout, one of the daughters of that family is an aunt by marriage of mine, so I'm familiar with the old house.
Arlene: I wanted to ask you, you mentioned that your parents came here. I would like to ask where they came from, how they came and when they came.
Grace: That's the grandparents? My grandparents were the ones that came here. The grandparents on my father's side, the Winkler side, he came here when he was sixteen. He came here from Kentucky. And he came primarily to go to the gold fields, at that time in 1849. But after he got here, he decided that since he was a farmboy, he would prefer to farm rather than spend his time in the gold fields. Then on my mother's side, the Duer side, my grandfather came here, I'm not sure of the year, but it was sometime in the mid-1800's and he came from Missouri and he came first without his family. They didn't want to come. And then when he went back and brought his family a few years later, they came across the northern part of the United States and came

down from Oregon and settled in California. Whereas my father's father came across the plains driving a team of oxen and came over the Sierras and into Sacramento and down into Sonoma County.
Arlene: Did you hear any stories about them when they came by wagon train?
Grace: I've heard, in fact it's in our history, that my grandfather Winkler, did have some skirmishes with the Indians, but it was not of a serious [natureI. Well, it could have been but the Indians stole their horses. They had a train of horses with them. But they were able to get them back without any great loss. They were more or less a friendly band of Indians that were just out to get the cattle if they could. And I haven't heard any particular story of my grandfather Duer coming down from Oregon. I think that was a few years later when things were just a little bit more stable.
Arlene: Did they describe what the living conditions were like when they came across by wagon train? The daily living?
Grace: No, if they have, I've forgotten about it. I was a kid.
Arlene: Did they have children at the time?
Grace: No, because when my grandfather Winkler came across he was just a young boy, that is, we'd consider him a boy now. He was only sixteen. When my grandfather Duer came here, I didn't hear much about his first traveling to California alone. But when he brought his family, it was later and he came through the Oregon Trail and down into California. As I say, if I had heard tales, I've forgotten.
Arlene: And your parents then were born here?
Grace: Yes.
Arlene: Where were they born?
Grace: My mother was not born here. There were nine in the family and she was born in Missouri. Her two younger sisters were born in California, but the other seven of them were born in Missouri.
Arlene: So how did she get across country?
Grace: Well, they are the ones who came down through the Oregon Trail.
Arlene: So did she ever describe to you what it was like? She was probably too young?
Grace: Well, yes, she was old enough to know that she was delighted to come to California and get out of Missouri. They were people

that didn't have an awful lot. My grandfather was a Civil War veteran and I think his education didn't go much further than the first few grades in elementary school.

Arlene: Which wasn't that unusual at the time.

Grace: No, it wasn't. In fact, I came across four letters that I had received from him just recently in going through some old papers. And, after he got here, and brought his family, he would be homesick for Missouri, and he had a brother and some of the family still back there, and so he would go back every once in a while. And so evidently, I must have written to him. Because he was answering my letters. And I could tell by his [letters], they are difficult to read because of his education. His spelling is just terrible.

Arlene: They are special gems. I hope you are going to do something with them.

Grace: They are written in pencil and they've been put away. In fact, I had forgotten them completely. They were written in 1918. But they are in good condition. But the pencil is not too clear.

Arlene: Does it talk about the Civil War or anything?

Grace: In his letters, the only thing that he seemed to have on his mind was what he was doing and the weather. [Mostly the letters were about the weather and crops.] He did tell stories of the Civil War. They lived in the South, but they were Northern sympathizers. And his dad had already been inducted into the Army and he had heard that they were going to be taking his age young man in the next draft. And that would have been in the Southern Army and he didn't want that, so he struck out through the underground to get to where his dad was. And he was just a young fellow, around 14 or 16 and he was too young to be a soldier. But he was a drummer boy and water boy where they took water onto the battlefield. So, he didn't talk a great deal about the actual war. Either he didn't remember, or it was too painful, one or the other.

Arlene: So your mother, then, she wasn't born here, but she moved to Setastopol? Is that where your mother and father met?

Grace: And it's funny, I never did hear, I'm sure I would remember it, I never did hear how they met. I just don't know.

My mother's family lived in town and my dad[s] family was out in the Green Valley area, out beyond Graton. It must have been at some social function where they met.

Arlene: Do you know how old they were?

Grace: Well, let's see, mother was a year older than dad. Mother was born in 1879 and dad was born in 1880. And they were married in 1903. So they were 23 and 24. I have a wedding picture that was taken of them in Santa Rosa. I have several. But one that I particularly liked. They were both standing. And mother had, of course, the old trailing skirts and big sleeves and a big pinched waist and a hat that must have been beautiful. It had a big white plume clear from the front to the back. And I took the picture to the fourth grade, the Outreach Program that we are doing. And one little girl wrote afterwards that she thought that my parents were just beautiful. And she said "I would have loved to have a hat like that".

Arlene: Do you have any of the old clothing?

Grace: No, just pictures. I have quite a number [of them]. I have my grandfather's Civil War picture in uniform. And so I have several of the old pictures.

Arlene: Are you going to have them copied for the historical society?

Grace: If they want them. There's one picture of the Winkler family, my dad's family. There were six boys and three girls in that family. And I have a photograph of the six boys together, which is kind of unusual at that age, that era. And I've often thought I wonder how grandmother got six boys [together].

Arlene: Well, are you familiar with what they had to do to take the pictures? The old pictures, because of the cameras, they had to leave their lenses open for a long time. So especially with kids, but all of them had to have braces behind their necks to keep them still. So can you imagine six boys with braces behind their necks?

Grace: Well, I don't know what year this was taken, but they are all young men. The oldest brother was the only one that went on to college. The rest of them were farmers. And he was a surveyor in Santa Rosa. And he passed away at a fairly early age. The

rest of them, they are all gone now, but they lived to be a ripe old age.

Arlene: I want to ask you, you were born at your grandparents' house. Where were your parents living at the time?

Grace: I don't know. Dad had a small ranch just a mile west of Graton. But there were no buildings on it. Because I remember we moved out there when I was about perhaps four or five years, maybe even younger than that. And I know that dad built the barn first and so we lived in the barn, then, until the house was built. So people say, shut the door, were you born in a barn? I lived in a barn.

Arlene: Do you think that your parents lived with your grandparents?

Grace: I don't think so. I just don't know.

Arlene: So for the first five years, you were somewhere. But you don't know where. And then you were in Graton. For how long?

Grace: Until I was married.

Arlene: And I wanted to find out about the living conditions at the time. So this was from 1912 to 1929. You lived in Graton. And I wanted to find out what the house was like. You lived in a barn for a while, and what all the things were like, the lifestyle - the plumbing, the transportation of the time...

Grace: Well, it was a rural area. We lived up on a little private road off of the county road and we were just a short ways above the Gillam Cemetery. And I think that is on what is called Sullivan Road now. And the house had two bedrooms and a screened porch, where in the summertime my parents slept. And then there was a kitchen, which had a pass cubbard, which we called it, from the kitchen into the dining room and a living room which we very seldom used. The parlor. And the fireplace was in the dining room. And there was bay windows, I remember that.

Arlene: Did you have electricity?

Grace: Yes, we did. And I don't know whether we had it when we were first there or not, but I know that the house burned down in around 1940, and they couldn't find any other reason other than they thought it might be the wiring. And I think the wiring was done later than when the house was first built. And it was a brown shingle house with quite a good sized porch, I remember.

And then we had what we called the tank house. And it was so cool

in the summertime. And when the pump was on and the tank would overflow then it would drip down onto the [bottom], and it was... And my dad had one patch, one or two acres of cherries and the rest was grapes, and then he planted Gravenstein apples in the grape vineyards, so that when he pulled the grapes out the apples would be in production. And many times it would be a good year and everything would be fine. Then he would go and pay off the mortgage. And then he would have a bad year, and he would have to borrow for another year. But it was a good [life]. He never complained. There was a family of five boys just across the road. I was the same age as their middle boy, so I grew up more or less a tomboy. I had more boy cousins than I had girl cousins. But a lot of good memories of those days.

Arlene: Did you have running water at the time?

Grace: Yes, we did. We had one bathroom, which was between bedrooms. And the tub was the kind on little legs, but we had running water and we always had a cow for our own personal use. We didn't sell it, but it was for our own use. And I remember how nice and thick the cream would raise on the pans of milk. And I guess that's about all that I can [remember].

Arlene: Can you remember your mother's lifestyle? She probably didn't work in a regular [paid] job, did she?

Grace: No, her social life is that she belonged to the Graton Women's Club.

Arlene: What was her first name?

Grace: Charlotte. And that club was still in operation there. They have in the springtime, a garden show, out there in Graton. but that was all she did. But she did all her canning. And I can't remember when we didn't have some kind of car for transportation. The first one was a Ford, of course, and dad didn't particularly want mother to drive. I guess he was afraid that she couldn't do it properly. And so one day she had observed and they were really simple things, and she determined that she [could drive]. And it was a touring car. So she put me in the back seat. And my dad was working over at one of his brother's ranches. And we were going to go over there. And so she was going too fast to make the turn. And so we went around I guess it was about [a] four mile loop to get back again. The second time she still felt she was going a little too fast. So she told me to listen to her and if she told me to get out, to drop over the back

end of the car, and drop down into the road. But about the third time around she was aware of enough and she was going slow enough to make the turn all right. After that, why she never had any more problems. But it was evidently kind of a wild ride that first one.

Arlene: It sounds like she was one of the early liberated ladies.

Grace: Dad had the reputation of always having the nicest horse and buggy in the county, and he was very particular about it. He didn't loan his horse out or any of his working stock, unless he was with them to take care of them himself. Because I did say a while ago, he did take his team to San Francisco to help in the cleaning up after the earthquake. So we did have a horse, but I don't remember that as much as the automobile. And later, dad bought me a little Ford Roadster that I drove to high school. That was quite the thing. Before that though, I had a horse and rode to both the Marshall School and to Oak Grove which is in Graton.

Arlene: I wanted to ask you, we had talked before about the earthquake. You said your parents had gone through it and probably your grandparents.

Grace: I don't remember hearing my grandparents talk about it at all. The only thing I remember is that one of my mother saying that she thought the house was taken up.

Arlene: Can you say that over again [for the tape].

Grace: My mother and dad were just getting up on that April morning and mother having come from Missouri was familiar more with tornadoes than she was with earthquakes. And they looked out the window and saw the tops of the trees which were swaying and she thought that the house had been lifted up by a tornado. And she told dad, if the house just stuck together until they landed, they would be all right. And dad did take his [horses, to San Francisco]. Anybody that had any stock that could help, went to San Francisco, because they were in desperate need.

Arlene: So, it was much worse in San Francisco? Because I know the whole downtown here was supposed to be leveled.

Grace: That was the funny thing about the earthquake. It would strike one section and leave another untouched.

Arlene: Depending on what kind of land it was on?

Grace: I guess, because there are places, I think it is in the Forestville area, where they have grapevines, where they have a row, and then part of the row will be shifted.

Arlene: Just like on the earthquake trail.

Grace: Yeah.

Arlene: Now, I also heard that there were a lot of fires here in town from people who had left cook fires in their houses going. Do you know anything about that?

Grace: No, I have heard it, but I don't know anything about it.

Arlene: So, all the wooden structures downtown had to be replaced probably because Main Street was flattened I think.

Grace: Yes, I don't remember. I do have a book at home, but it is mainly of San Francisco, because of the population and there were so many more people who lost their lives there. Up here, it was more property destruction.

Arlene: So people then went down to San Francisco by buggy or car to take supplies down and to help out?

Grace: A lot of the [people did]. In fact, my dad with his team would go to Petaluma where the Steamer Gold came up and then would truck it from there up to Santa Rosa, and Sebastopol and Guerneville and the various other towns.

Arlene: Oh, that's where Steamer Gold came from? I didn't know that. Now, I wanted to get into a little bit about the schools you attended. You mentioned several that you attended. Can you name them again?

Grace: Yes, I first started [in] the Marshall District, which is out now on the corner of, I think it's Occidental Road and Mill Station Road, and I went there from the time I was in first grade until I was in the fifth. I rode a horse to school. That was just a mile from where I lived. And it was a two-room school. And Mrs. Toomey, who is quite a historian, she has written books [about] the history of Sonoma County. She was one of the teachers. My own teacher was named Grace Discher. And we didn't have water in the school. There was a pump out in the yard where we got the water. And then I transferred from there to Oak Grove which was in Graton and I went there the fifth and sixth grades and I also rode my horse when I went to school there.

Arlene: Where did you put it when you had it there during the day -

just tied up?

Grace: No, there was a little shed, a shelter and I don't think I was the only one that rode a horse to school. And there were two bridges up the road from my home - wooden bridges. And my parents said they could tell when I was on my way home because they could hear the hooves because I used to just let the reins go and hold onto the saddle and let 'er fly.

Arlene: Were there telephones at the time, to your house?

Grace: We had a telephone, but it was later than that. I remember my grandmother had a telephone in Sebastopol and I can even remember the number - it was 118 J.

Arlene: So, if you had something happening at school, say if you got sick, these days the teacher will always phone home. What happened when you got sick?

Grace: I don't know. I don't think we ever got sick (laugh) or if we did we just went on.

Arlene: So if you had an emergency, you just went home, and you went by horse?

Grace: I guess so, uh huh. I don't remember any emergencies.

Arlene: And so you went to school at Oak Grove and then the third school [was]?

Grace: And then the Marshall District, the original place that I went to was disbanded and they consolidated with the elementary school in Sebastopol. And my dad drove the school bus from out in that district. So then I went my seventh and eighth grade to the Sebastopol Elementary, which is now Park Side. And my children went there. And then the teacher, the professor at the elementary school in Sebastopol was Professor Staton, and then from there, I went to Analy for four years.

Arlene: I was told that that building is a different building. Can you describe the other building?

Grace: Well, it was two stories.

Arlene: Was it wooden?

Grace: Uh, huh. And in the same place as the school is now as I recall. We used to have our graduation out under the trees.

Arlene: In the front or in the back?

Grace: Well, it would be closer to High School Road. There [are] still trees out in that area. And our graduation was always

held out there unless the weather was just impossible. And I guess if you would ask my husband what the highlight of his years there were, he was a football player, captain of the football team. And we beat Santa Rosa twice.

Arlene: So, it sounds like you met your husband in high school?

Grace: I met him in grammar school. He said he remembered me as a little blond with curls. He lived on South Main Street.

Arlene: Where did he live?

Grace: I don't know the number, but it was coming south, it would be on the right hand side. And it was not far from the main part of town, actually.

Arlene: How much difference in years were there [between you and your husband]?

Grace: He was three months older than me.

Arlene: Cause he said he remembered you as a little girl with curls.

Grace: Well, one of my cousins lived next door to him and they were listening to their little radios [can't remember the type of radio, Old-timer's would know]. They were listening one day when I came in. And that was the first time that I recalled seeing him. You had to listen to it [radio] with earphones. And he remembered that my cousin took his - my husband's - earphones and gave them to me, so I was listening and he wasn't. But I imagine we were probably both in about the 7th or 8th grade at that time.

Arlene: So when did you start being boyfriend and girlfriend?

Grace: Not until our senior year, and that was February 20, 1925. We went to a basketball game at Analy.

Arlene: What was your husband's name?

Grace: Ben. He originally came from Oakland on East 14th Street. They primarily came up here because of his health. He wasn't too robust a youngster.

Arlene: Sounds like he got robust later.

Grace: He did. He stayed out of school a year and said that he and his dog just roamed the country. It was more of a nervous condition, I suppose, but he was fine.

Arlene: How old was he then?

Grace: They came up here when he was about ten.

Arlene: So he and his dog roamed around the country when he was about ten.

Grace: Yeah, He'd take a little lunch with him, course there was no reason to not go wherever you wanted in those days. So then as soon as his health was good enough, he had to go back to school again. And he [was] a half year behind me because of that. He graduated in '26 and I was out in '25. He had twin sisters and one of them passed away before they came up here and the other sister lived in, she was married and lived down in the Bay Area until they moved away and went up to the northern part of our state. And then his mother had a lunch room and had the hotel. I can't recall which building it is, but it is on South Main Street, the first block off of the - where the signals are.

Arlene: Bodega?

Grace: Um hum. Well, it was on South Main, but it was - the building is still there. And she had a tea room or lunch room underneath where, beside where the stairs went upstairs to the second floor where the hotel rooms were. I don't know whether they still use it as a hotel or not.

Arlene: Well, there is a hotel the side of Main Street closer to us than downtown, the next block there's a little hotel above the Green "something" Cafe.

Grace: This would be across from the Times.

Arlene: Yes, it's still there and there's a bar downstairs and upstairs is a hotel.

Grace: At the time that she had this I was still a senior in high school and taking quite a bit of art courses and I made a little "Gingham Girl" - it was a little figure that she used for her sign. It was a full-skirted little girl and she had a sign made for her lunchroom and also we stenciled the same little figure around the wainscoting in the lunchroom. And I used to help on weekends there with her. She did all the cooking.

Arlene: Was this after you married?

Grace: No, before. It was while we were courting. In fact, after I graduated from high school, then I went to Sweet's Business College. I guess it was a ten-month course. And then I worked for Rosenberg's Department Store. And I was in the office and doing the preliminary bookkeeping at that time. And Mr. Rosenberg had told me that if I was satisfactory that I would get a raise

at the end of the year. And so at the end of the year, I didn't get it. So, there didn't seem to be a promise that I would. So I told him that if I didn't, that I was quitting at the next month. And I didn't have to work, the reason that I could stick up for it. So I quit and within I guess a month, I was bookkeeper at Corrick's. And I was bookkeeper at Corrick's then up until the end of 1930.

Arlene: You got married then in 1929?

Grace: I worked at Corrick's from about '28 until '31.

Arlene: So is that when you had your first child?

Grace: In 1932. We lived on Humboldt Street in the Curlander Apartments. And Mr. Curlander had a cigar store as his main business. And he would always give newlyweds their first month's rent free. It's just off of Third Street. So actually, it was handy for us to live there, because [we just went] down 3rd onto 4th and into Corrick's. So we lived there a year and then moved into Sebastopol.

Arlene: Where did you move in Sebastopol?

Grace: The first place we moved to was on Calder Hill Apartments, there at the corner of Calder and South Main Street. And we lived there a year. Then my husband was working for the Standard Oil Company. Well, first he went with his folks, they moved away and went back to Oakland. And he was there for about a year. Then he came back and lived with myself and my parents. Because he didn't like Oakland. He wanted to come back here. And then he worked for a creamery here in Sebastopol.

Arlene: Oh, I didn't know there was a creamery here. Where was it?

Grace: Do you know where the old Chamber of Commerce Building [is]? Well, it was on the corner on the opposite, on the left, I don't remember that street, but across that street [Bodega]. Where Best and Feaks are.

Arlene; There's a little shop, Gone Tropo'?

Grace: Yeah. And then he worked there the first year we were married and then in 1930 he started working for the Standard Oil. And then the next ten years we were either in Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Healdsburg, and once down the Peninsula and then back to McFarland Avenue in 1940.

Arlene; What was the address there [McFarland Avenue]?

Grace: 955 McFarland.

Arlene: So, what year did you move to McFarland?

Grace: 1940. And we lived there for 35 years.

Arlene: I wanted to ask you, did you attend a church here in town when you lived here?

Grace: Yes, as a small youngster, my Winkler side of the family were mostly Congregationalists and I don't remember the faith of my grandmother's side - my mother's side. But when my grandmother Winkler and my grandmother Duer both, my grandmother Winkler particularly was one of the early Christian Scientists. And then my mother became interested in it and so most of my Sunday School days were down here on the corner of Florence Avenue and Bodega Avenue, the Christian Science church. Of course, where I went was further down. The church was opposite the library, on that corner. That's where they had their church. And there was one in between that was set back. So many of the houses have an extra little building in the back. And we were also there for a while. My children went to, I think the one they went to was that one that goes up by the library. Before Calder. Anyway, that's the church that I attend now. My husband, his family were of the Methodist belief.

Arlene: I wanted to ask you too if you could describe some of the church events at the time, or describe what the buildings looked like.

Grace: I don't remember the appearance. I heard people of the family talk about it, but my grandfather Winkler gave - I don't know the size, but maybe it was an acre or something like that - of his property out in the Green Valley for the church to be built - the Congregational church. And of course, the church and the schools were the social centers in the old days. I know going back to a story that I've heard of in the early days when my Winkler family, the early pioneers, there's a book called Patriarchs of the Valley, I think it's by a granddaughter of Isaac Sullivan wrote it. And in this book, she tells, it's really about the day-to-day living of the early pioneers. And they mention in the book going to the Winkler family for an apple-peeling evening. And we weren't sure what that meant. But they mentioned that they had 50 some boxes to peel. So in doing their research, they found out what they'd do, the families would get together, slice them and they dried them out in the sun and then they would use them in the winter and they would divide them amongst all of the families.

Arlene: Did they make juice together?

Grace: I don't know. They may have made cider. I don't know. But that was their apple-peeling party.

Arlene: Do you know of any other events that took place around church?

Grace: I don't remember. There may have been. I think most of the church activities were done in the day rather than the evening because they had to travel quite a ways to go. But then in my own church, they don't have a great deal of social[izing]. Occasionally they will have some get-together at the home of a member, but it is not church-oriented particularly. It isn't under the auspices of the church. It's just a friendly gathering. It's a little different that way than so many of the organized beliefs.

Arlene: Do you remember anything at all about the First World War?

Grace: Yes, I do. I remember the day of the Armistice. I had two cousins. One was in the Navy and one was in the Army. That was on my father's side, the Winkler side and the Armistice of course was in November and it had been rumored that the war was about to end and this particular morning, we heard sirens and whistles, bells and everything out, and that was when we were living out on the ranch. And so my dad said it's either the end of the war or it's the return of the elections, 'cause we got the election returns through newspapers and it was days later that we would get the returns. So he told me to get on my horse and go down and find out. So I rode down to Graton. I was eleven. I can remember the anxiety of the family with the two cousins that were in the war. Especially the cousin that was in the army. He had a lot of trench fighting and it took him some time to recover from it. And I have a little short spade and it was from the First World War, he brought back. It was one the soldiers used to dig the trenches. And it's such a little short thing. My cousin had given it to my dad. And of course I got it.

Arlene: Was he from Sebastopol?

Grace: He was from [the] Forestville area. And the one that was in the Navy was out in the Vine Hill District. And they both came home and married and had families.

Arlene: I wanted to ask about other times in history too. Before I do that I wanted you to describe, what the town looked like

when you were younger? In Sebastopol, or West County, what the transportation was like to Santa Rosa?

Grace: There was the Petaluma-Santa Rosa Railroad. They used to call it "poor and stingy". I traveled many miles on that. See, Sebastopol was the center and there was a route to Forestville and one to Santa Rosa and one to Petaluma and I rode the electric cars as a small child, more or less as a convenience to my parents because many times the farmers would go to Santa Rosa on Saturday to do their shopping once a week. And a lot of the families would join together and they might want to stay over in the evening to have dinner and perhaps to go to a movie and it would be too late for the littler kids to stay. So they would put us on the train and send us back to grandma's house. And my grandmother at that time lived just off of DuFranc. And so the conductors and motormen knew most of the youngsters and it was just such an easy era to live in. And then for a while when my husband was living out at the ranch with my parents before we were married, we were both working in Santa Rosa but our hours didn't coincide. So there were times then when we would both go over in the morning, but he was really carrying then two jobs - clerking and working in the drug store. So then I'd leave the car for him to come home in and I'd come home on the railroad and either walked a mile or dad, if it was convenient, would meet me at Graton. And the funny little thing that I remember about the railroad station in Graton, there was a little area, [a] corner of the station that was enclosed. And it was a lending-library. I think the Graton Community Club were the ones that supplied it. And it was nice to have to read a book while you were there or you could take it because there were no libraries there at all. And people would donate books to it. So that was a little bit different.

Arlene: And how much was your fare?

Grace: I don't remember. One of the conductors named Hall and his daughter-in-law lived in the Forestville area and her family was Jacobson and she now lives in Washington State and I correspond with her and she married into the Hall family. And also Hall Road is from that same family. She sent to the museum one of the

little ticket punches that her father-in-law had used, so we have that in the museum. It's interesting, she has written a book, in fact her husband and her husband's brother had the Hall Drugstore in Santa Rosa for many years. They both went to high school at Analy and then went on to, I guess Cal, where they got their pharmacy degrees. And she has written a book about her father and mother and they came from Sweden and her father came here, left Sweden when he was twelve. There were relatives who had emigrated to the U.S., so he did have somebody to come to.

Arlene: By himself?

Grace: Uh huh, by himself, landed in New York. And he also, before he left Sweden, he worked for the King of Sweden in the King's garden. It's so interesting because she remembers it by her father telling her these things and the amount that young people traveled by themselves in that era was amazing. We hesitate, it's just too bad [we can't let young people do this now] because there are just such opportunities nowadays even for young people, if we could just be assured of their safety.

Arlene: What's the name of the book? Do you know?

Grace: She had it privately published. But I could also get copies of it. She sent me one. The other book, <u>Patriarch of the Valley</u> was printed in a more or less private printing. You can buy that through the Santa Rosa Museum - that's where they have it.

INTERVIEW TWO WITH GRACE ABBOTT, March 12, 1992

Arlene: Hi, Grace, this is our second interview. I wanted to make sure that I got your maiden name right. It was Winkler? [yes] And your mother's maiden name was Duer? [yes] And were they both German?

Grace: No, my dad's family was German. My mother's family were Norman French.

Arlene: And did you have brothers and sisters when you were growing up?

Grace: No, I was an only child.

Arlene: Did you have several children?

Grace: Three, two daughters and a son.

Arlene: Do you remember the name of the creamery where your husband worked here in town?

Grace: I think it was Sebastopol Creamery.

Arlene: And how about the drug store where he worked in Santa Rosa?

Grace: That was the Rutherford Drugstore.

Arlene: And so your ethnic background is Norman French and German. And you said that when you speak to children at Pine Crest and Park Side you tell them what it was like to be a 10 year old in 1917. Do you have any other memories that you can share with me about that?

Grace: Yes, we were out yesterday on that Preservation Committee checking old homes. I was telling the two ladies I was with, we went up to my old home and there was a - it is just above a little private road above the Gillam Cemetery out there west of Graton. And I used to ride my horse to school and when I would come home, I would stop at the mailbox which is down at the beginning of the private road. And my horse, I couldn't get her to go up the side so I could reach the mailbox. I would have to get off. And then I was too short to get back on and so I would have to lead her the rest of the way home. So I decided I had had enough of that and so when she wouldn't get up the side, I'd get off, but after I got the mail, I'd climb up on the mailbox and then on her neck and slide down to get into the saddle. That finished that part of it. But I rode to two different schools. One the Marshall School, which is no longer in existence, and then to the Oak Grove School in Graton. And both of those were two-room schools.

Arlene: Your house is gone now? You said it burnt down?

Grace: Yes, when we rode up there yesterday, the house across the road is still there and one below my dad's home,b ut the people whose place adjoined ours, by the name of Jewell. And he bought

dad's property. We only had 17 acres. I'm not sure whether it's still owned by the Jewell family or not.

Arlene: Same Jewell as Jewell Avenue? It must be.

Grace: I don't know. It's a George Jewell and he was a rancher - apple farmer. Course he is gone, but I don't know whether his sons still have it or not. But there used to be a real tall big oak tree that I had a peach of a swing [in]. But I would pump myself up and go the full length. I could see clear over the the valley and it was such fun. I don't know whether you have questions about the last time. I wasn't sure where I had lived after leaving my grandmother's house. I have found out [about] the old Winkler homestead. There was sort of an apartment built on the back and they used that for a summer kitchen when my grandmother had a Chinese cook and they used to cook for the workers. And then it was used more or less as a kind of stopover for different members of the family that were either moving or couldn't move directly from one place or another, so I kind of imagine that that's where it was [we lived after I was born].

Arlene: Now, this isn't the place on Florence?

Grace: Well, this would be out in the Green Valley, the Graton area. But where I was born was on Florence [Avenue]. I was going to try to get there yesterday to try to ask the people what the number is on that street. But it's the third house from the corner of Wilton and Florence and then this way it would be the third house, just one house between the Strout house and my grandmother's place. If you were facing the Strout House on Florence Avenue, it would be to the right.

Arlene: So, was it built around the time of the Strout House?

Grace: Well, it doesn't look like the Strout House. But you see it must have been. I don't know when the Strout HOuse was built.

Arlene: Probably around the same time as this [my house] - 1885-1895.

Grace: Well, it wouldn't have been too much later than that, because I was born in 1907, but it's a much smaller place. And we are connected to the Strout family by Erma Strout.

Arlene: Do you know what Mr. Strout did for a job?

Grace: The only one that I can remember was Erma, because she had married an uncle of mine and I think, I have a vague recollection of a sister, but I don't remember that.

Arlene: I wanted to ask you about different times in the history of the United States and how it fit into Sebastopol [history]. We talked about World War I. Do you have any recollections of the Depression here in Sebastopol?

Grace: Yes. We were married in 1929 just before that stock market crash. But actually, we didn't seem to feel the Depression. My husband got a job shortly after we were married,with Standard Oil Company, and we didn't have a lot of money, but we were not hurting at all. We always, more or less, didn't buy things unless we had the money to pay cash for it and I think having a job [helped]. I worked also from '29 til the end of 1930, so we were both working then, but we, and I think too that this area didn't feel the depression like some places.

Arlene: There were camps here, I was told - Pellini Camp and up at Handy's Grove. There were camps for transients and displaced people. Do you know anything about that?

Grace: No, I don't. I remember more of the people that were here as soldiers during the war. Course, I was old enough then to realize - I was 21 when I was married. But we just didn't feel the Depression personally at all. And I don't believe there was any of our family that felt it.

Arlene: O.K. World War II.

Grace: World War II, my husband was delivering gasoline out to Bloomfield and that area. And there were times when the customer would want what we called at that time Pearl Oil, which is the same thing as kerosene, for lighting and the stove oil. And they would put the barrels up on a stand, a wooden stand, which I would imagine they were probably 15-20 feet up in the air, because that way they had the gravity to [feed into the house]. But my husband had to go up the ladders with the five gallon bucket to fill it and [there were] Navy and Army planes, because we had both fields where they were training. And I was reading in Gaye LeBaron's column the other day about the soldier's doing their divebombing and strafing and such as that. And the first time, my husband said that he experienced [it], they divebombed right over the top of him. He said that he almost got off the ladder, because he didn't know what they were doing. And he said that it was awful close. And then we had a social group that wanted to make it as

comfortable for the soldiers and sailors that were here. And they had no way of getting into town from the camps so there was quite a number of us with cars would go out and bring them in.

Arlene: Where was the camp?

Grace: This one that I went to was out beyond O'Farrell Hill and Bodega. There was a camp out there.

Arlene: Do you know what it was called?

Grace: I don't remember. [Later, Grace said it was a conservation camp] And so many of the soldiers that I had any contact with were from the South. A lot of them came back after the War and settled here, they liked it so well. I know one night taking them home from Sebastopol to their camp, they were laughing, cause I was so much smaller than any of them. They were big fellows. They said"if we were back home, back in the South, we would say that you were 'carrying' us home". And they said, "Can you imagine?" But that was just a term. I was "carrying" them home. They were a nice bunch of fellows. They were home-sick, but it was just a different feeling than now. We were safe just anyplace that we wanted to go.

Arlene: Do you remember anything else about World War II? Did you have friends here in town who had gone into the service? Or their children?

Grace: My husband would have. He had his deferment, or whatever that card was that he got, because of his occupation. And it was strange because my father in World War I didn't go because he was a farmer, and that was an exemption. And he would have gone in a later draft, but at his age and in agricultural work, they needed him here. I did have cousins that were in World War I. One in the Army and one in the Navy.

Arlene: Do you remember when the War was over, how people felt around here - the 2nd World War?

Grace: Yes, we were delighted; however, maybe it was because I was just a kid when the First World War was over, but I seem to remember more of the feeling at that time than I do the Second World War. Perhaps because we were expecting the armistice. And it seemed like everything was going our way for the allies. And then again, I had a family to take care of and so I don't remember too much about that.

Arlene: Did you know any Japanese people who had lived here before the war and were interned?

Grace: My husband delivered to quite a number of the Japanese people and they were excellent people. We felt sorry, but it seemed to me, the people that I knew seemed to feel that it was something necessary to do. It wasn't right, the people that bought up their property and took it. But the fact that of course there are so many things in war time that are rumors and Hawaii is not too terribly far from our coast, so I think it was understandable that there was that feeling of fear.

Arlene: Can you think of any other historic times that affected you here in Sebastopol?

Grace: No.

Arlene: I wanted to ask you about holidays here in Sebastopol. When you were a child, what was it like to celebrate Christmas? Can you remember everything, like did you chop your own Christmas tree down?

Grace: Well, being an only child, most of my Christmases were spent at cousin's homes because that's where the fun was, both in my dear family and in the Winkler family, so that's where I would be. In my early childhood, I would be at my grandparents' home. Later it would be with uncles and cousins and aunts and such as that.

Arlene: So how did you celebrate?

Grace: Mainly a big dinner. And what I remember about that, the kids always had to wait for the second table because there usually were so many people, that the adults had the first set at the table. And I remember, I still have my grandmother's old oak table that would pull out to just feet after feet. But I just remember playing with the kids. I don't remember much about exchanging gifts. Maybe that was [a] more private celebration before we went to the dinner.

Arlene: Do you remember anything about Easter? Did you get new clothes?

Grace: I don't remember that. But I do remember Easter was more of a picnic time. We would go on picnics rather than having a [dinner] and that carried through, especially through my grandchildren. We always had a picnic. In the last few years, my family has gotten so scattered here and there, and it isn't always easy to have a picnic. But that was Easter time.

Arlene: So you didn't get new clothes. I remember when I was a little girl, we had to get new gloves and hats.

Grace: I do remember some Easter clothes, but not too much. But I remember more of my two daughters, because I made their clothes. And there were three years difference in their ages, but as they got a little older there wasn't that much difference in them, so I dressed them alike. I always had hoped for twins but we didn't get them.

Arlene: How about the Fourth of July here, were there fireworks a long time ago?

Grace: Yes, from my place up west of Graton, I could look down cause we were up on a hill and I could see the fireworks from the Portuguese [Holy Ghost Hall]. They had fireworks. I remember those more than I do the Santa Rosa ones, but I'm sure they must have had them in Santa Rosa as well.

Arlene: But there was no place else in Sebastopol [for fireworks]? Just the Portuguese Society?

Grace: That's the only one that I remember, uh huh.

Arlene: Do you remember anything else about the 4th of July?

Grace: No.

Arlene: How about Halloween when you were little?

Grace: Well, that again, it was strictly...see, we were out in the country and the three houses up my area were the only ones that were close so, and I didn't go into town in my grandmother's area, so I didn't do a great deal on Halloween. I've heard stories about my dad getting into mischief [on Mischief Night].

Arlene: And what were the stories, can you share them?

Grace: Well, I did hear once that a bunch of the young men that wield class now, and I think my dad was one of them, that took an outhouse and put it up on top of another building.

Arlene: How about Thanksgiving, was there anything special about [it]?

Grace: Nothing more again than just a family dinner. I remember more of family dinners and such as that at my grandmother Duer's on the Duer side of the family than the Winkler family.

Arlene: And where were they located?

Grace: In Sebastopol?

Arlene: They weren't the ones on Florence Avenue then, were they?

Grace: They moved from there, and I don't know when they moved from there. And my grandmother lived out in the country for a while, but I don't remember that address either. Then the last home they lived [in] was up on Healdsburg Avenue - is it DuFranc?

Well, right in that area. And that house I think, is still there also. It's up, I can remember that little street that goes right up [the hill]. It's a dead-end street. About half-way up the hill on the right hand side, going out of town. About half way up the hill. And as far as I know the house is still there that my grandmother [lived in]. And she lived there, my granddad died first and then grandma died. And her last few years, one of her bachelor sons lived with her. And the menfolks were all well-drillers and the women were just housewives, they had no occupation. And some of them then went from here down to the San Jose area, some of the well-drillers and they continued in that business down there. continued in that business down there.

Arlene: Can you think of anything else that you'd like to share?

Grace: The only thing I have, I don't remember exactly what I had given you about the Winkler family early days here, after my grandfather came here. My granddad Winkler, his first name was Clayton, and he was born in Kentucky in 1831 and he came out here when he was eighteen to go to the gold fields in 1849 and, he being a farm boy, decided that he would rather have land than to work in the mines. But he had to get the money to buy the land, and he worked as a wheelwright for a while, and then every so often he would quit and go back to Green Valley where he wanted to buy the property. And he liked that area when he wanted to establish his home. In 1860, he bought I think it was 280 acres at first. And he built a log cabin in 1860 from the trees that he had cut off the property. And then in 1866 he married my grandmother. Her name was Martha Brain and she was from England. And she was 18 and he was 36 when they were married and then in 1867, he built the large home. They had 9 children and the log cabin began to be kind of cramped.

Arlene: How far out on Green Valley was that?

Grace: It would be, you would go north of Graton, I was thinking of the old railroad track going north from Graton to Forestville. And I'm almost sure it was on Green Valley Road. [It was before the big turn]. Yes, because it was not far from the road. There used to be a road you'd go north from Graton, then you'd turn left to go down Green Valley Road. If you went to the right, it

would take you on up the hill and then towards Forestville. I was just trying to think. It's my recollection that the hill was called James Hill and I could be wrong, but that is what my remembrance of it [is]. And that was a kind of a border of the Winkler 280 acres. And my granddad had given I think it was two acres and they built a Congregational Church on it.

Arlene: Are there any Winklers there now?

Grace: Yes, a cousin of mine lives on the old home place. The big house was built in 1867 out of redwood. And generally speaking, I think I said before, that most people built the barn first. But granddad felt that the house was the most important [with 9 children]. So he built the house in '67 and it was 30 years later before he built the barn. And they said that he always [for] 30 years dreamed of his dream barn. And I don't remember whether I had told you that my granddad had been gored by a bull in 1898. So that was just before the barn was finished. And it was an animal that they had raised and felt comfortable with. But he was working out on the ranch and had a stake and he was driving the stake into the ground and evidently that excited the bull or frightened him and he was gored in the chest. And he didn't die at that time, but he died in 1901, so he never really recovered. He was not in very good health after that. And he was a big man. There was only one of their sons that were under six foot.

Arlene: And then they had a granddaughter that was very tiny [Grace].

Grace: Well, evidently, my grandmother must have been rather small. She died in 1905, on what would have been my birthday, on the 20th of October. But I don't remember either of those grandparents. They were gone before I was born.

Arlene: So they were fairly young?

Grace: Well, let's see. Granddad died in 1901 and he was born in '31, so he would have been 70. And grandma died in 1905 and she was 18 years younger, so she died at an earlier age than my granddad did. My grandmother, they say that she was a very orderly person - very meticulous. And that she was timid. But rather strong-willed, I guess in a way. But they say that she was afraid of the dark. That always kind of struck me as a kind of [for a woman who lives out in the middle of nowhere with 9 children]. That

reminds me of the story of the Duer side of the family. My granddad was a person that liked to play jokes and they had a spinning wheel in one of the rooms and I was afraid of the dark as a youngster and so he sent me in to get a chair, a rocking chair, that he had hooked up to the spinning wheel. And when I set it down to open the door, it slid back across the floor, because of the wheel, and I came out of there, I guess like a scared rabbit. And it tickled granddad. He evidently must have liked me, probably he liked all of the kids, but whether he took a special liking to me as a child, I don't know, but I have letters from him and I even had an Easter card that he had sent to me. I do remember him. But why he had a particular [liking for me]. Maybe it was because, maybe my mother had been a favorite daughter.

Arlene: Was this the one who had been in the Civil War?

Grace: Yes. But back to my grandmother. She was born in 1849, the year that her husband-to-be came across in the covered wagon train and that's about all that I have. The Winklers have a genealogical record that goes back to the 1700s when we came from Germany.

Arlene: What is the name of your cousin who lives in the old house on Green Valley?

Grace: Wallace Winkler.

Grace's father's name was (Samuel) Ernest Winkler. Her mother's name was Charlotte Duer Winkler. Her paternal grandparents were named Clayton Winkler and Sarah Brain. Her maternal grandparents were named Shadrach Duer and Ladoska _____Duer.